

THE SECOND ADDRESS OF LORD  
REDESDALE, K.C.V.O., C.B., AT THE  
CAMPDEN SCHOOL OF ARTS & CRAFTS  
DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE  
WINTER SESSION ON OCTOBER 7  
MDCCCCV.

Essex Flower Rose





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## MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN



AMONG the countless myths which the rich fancy of the ancient Greeks has bequeathed to us, none, as it seems to me, is more beautiful, none more pregnant with meaning, than the story of Pandora. She, you will remember, was the first woman, the mother of all men, the Eve of classic mythology. To her the Gods entrusted a precious casket containing every good gift for mankind,—but it might not be opened. That was a solemn injunction. Now she, womanlike, bitten with curiosity, could not refrain from opening the box, if it were only for one peep at its contents. She looked, and alas! for the good God-sent gifts! They flew away, never to return. Terrified, she shut down the lid, but it was too late—only one gift remained, but it was the best of all,—Hope. That, at least, was saved.

Yet I venture to think that in some corner or cranny of the casket there must have lingered yet another gift; one closely allied to Hope, and almost as enriching to all of us. That gift was Imagination, and of that I wish to speak to you to-day. It is well for us that the lid was closed before Hope and Imagination had had time to escape.

I do not know whether there be any of you here present who are not familiar with Boswell's life of Johnson. If such there be let me urge you to repair the omission without delay. For not only is Boswell the first of all Biographers, but he is also a most excellent Master of the Ceremonies, who will introduce you to the very best society. Johnson himself, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, and a host of others. Where else can you enjoy the conversation of such a galaxy of wit and learning? Nay more, if you would listen to the talk of the King, is not His Majesty's interview with Johnson accurately recorded? But that belongs to another story.

On Tuesday the 5th of July in the year of grace 1763 Boswell called upon Dr. Johnson, who told him that he had been looking into the poems of a certain Scots Presbyterian Minister but "could find nothing in them." Boswell, ever eager to take up the cudgels for a brother Scot, said, "Is there not Imagination in them?" Johnson replied: "There is in them what *was* Imagination, but it is no more Imagination in *him* than sound is sound in the echo. And his diction, too, is not his own—we have long ago seen 'white-robed innocence' and 'flower-bespangled meads.' "

In all expression of thought, then, we should remember that "white-robed innocence" & "flower-bespangled meads" are something to be avoided by all those whose ambition it is to achieve any good thing in this world of much evil.



Perhaps you may be inclined to object, "this is not a school of Poetry," and to ask, "what have *we* to do with these commonplaces?" In a sense you will be right. If Poetry be confined to musical metres and jingling rhymes, then this is not a school of Poetry. But you must consider what was the original meaning of the words "Poet" and "Poem." They are derived from a Greek word signifying to make or create. The Poet was the man who made something, the Poem was that which he made; and it is worthy of remembrance in this school that in the first instance the word *poiema*, Poem, was exclusively applied to metal work. By degrees the words were extended to works of the Imagination, and the Romans, who affiliated them into their own language, used them in that sense exclusively.

The Romans were great warriors & great lawyers; indeed they laid the foundations of jurisprudence for the whole world. But in works of the Imagination they were singularly deficient: their art was feeble, and even of their two greatest Poets the one, Virgil, was a translator, adapter, and imitator, the other, Horace, was a society verse-maker—both first-rate in their way, but how inferior to the creative Imagination of the Greeks! For Poetry the Latins had not even a word in their own language. They borrowed the Greek word in its second intention, and so it was handed on to the rest of the world, becoming crystallised in almost every modern European tongue.

Poets, then, in the oldest acceptation of the word—

that is to say, makers or creators—you here aspire to be; and the technical school which fulfils its mission is in very truth a school of Poetry. This being so, it behoves you to lay to heart Dr. Johnson's criticism of Dr. Ogilvy, and to take heed lest you lay yourselves open to the charge of borrowing or adapting to your own uses what *was* Imagination in somebody else.

The gift of Imagination appears to be the peculiar privilege of man. The architecture of the beaver is clever and ingenious, but the work of one beaver differs only from that of his fellow in the shape and nature of the wood at their respective commands. The cells of a honeycomb, beautiful & mathematically correct as they are, differ in no particular from those in every other bee's construction. Every village boy knows that one thrush's nest is repeated character for character in that of another. With you it is different: each one of you can put something of himself into his work, and unless he does so he becomes a mere copyist, an echo and not a sound, a purveyor of "white-robed innocence" & "flower-bespangled meads."

Of course I do not pretend to say that every one, be he never so diligent, never so enthusiastic, can achieve a notable success in his art. The great Art-poet is as rare as the great Song-poet. But the humblest Craftsman, if he only have appreciation, for which some share of Imagination is required, can and will infuse into his work some Spark of Originality, some measure of the sense of Beauty which is

in him. That, I take it, is the meaning of the writing upon your walls :

“Give to barrows, trays, and pans  
Grace and glimmer of romance.”

And here I would fain utter a word of warning. The true Artist will not allow his fancy so to run riot as to annul the utility of his work. If your barrows will not wheel, if your trays be so fashioned that they will not carry cups and saucers in proportion to their size, if your pans will not fry your food, then your art becomes mere faddism and you are better without it.

I remember the erection of a great public office by a famous architect some thirty or forty years ago. In order to suit what he conceived to be essential to his elevation, the highest rooms had no windows but what could be formed out of the tops of the arched windows of the third floor. Now these rooms were meant for men to write in. Their only light came from the level of the floor, reaching four feet or so upward. The rooms had to be turned into store-rooms. Was that good art? The first function of a window is to give light and air. These windows gave only cruel draughts round feet and legs, and absolutely no light by which a man might work.

The first thing needful in a house, a barrow, a tray, or a pan is that it should serve the purpose for which it was intended. That end being achieved, embroider as you please, adorn as your genius may prompt you, as your Imagination may dictate.

For all the great work that has been done in the world, for all the great discoveries that have been made, we have to thank this sublime gift of Imagination—Imagination backed by courage.

When men saw the sun rise in the east, cross the great arch of the sky, and drop down out of sight in the west, what was more natural than that they should suppose that the sun revolved round the earth? So much was this the case that the belief became an article of religious faith ; and when there came thinkers whose Imagination was so strong that it could not refrain from working, & who saw that it was the earth and not the sun that moved, their newly-found knowledge, now the property of every infant, was combatted by all the horrors of the Inquisition. The Imagination of these men would have been little worth had it not been wedded to courage. Nothing needs more audacity than the denial of worn-out faiths, the attacking of threadbare opinions. Is there a finer picture in the whole history of human thought than that of the brave old philosopher Galileo, past seventy years of age, daring the Inquisitors with his famous speech *eppur si muove*, saying of the earth “for all that, it moves”? The spirit of modern Scepticism casts a doubt upon those words, but even if he did not speak them, he acted them, and deeds are more than speech. Thus was the Copernican system asserted & maintained, maugre the thunders of Popes and Potentates. See the great liners of to-day racing across the Atlantic! Leviathans of many thousand tons, crowded

with hundreds of passengers, setting time & space at defiance! And then think of Columbus straining his bold, yearning eyes seaward and westward, and dreaming of a great continent in the existence of which no man believed. With the eye of the Poet, with the eye of the Prophet, he sees what no other eye can see—visions of a Greatness yet unborn, visions of Possibilities how much more than fulfilled. During upwards of twenty years never for a moment did his courage fail to uphold the belief which was in him, the solemn creed of his Imagination. Wandering hither and thither, from Lisbon to Genoa, from Genoa to Venice, from Venice back to the Peninsula, scouted and flouted as a visionary by dullards and muddy brains, at last he finds his way to Spain. Travel-stained, foot-sore, weary, dying of starvation, he comes to beg a crust at a convent-door, and here at last he finds an ear to listen, a brain to comprehend. The Abbot, a man of shrewd perception, possessing great influence at Court, is struck with the noble bearing and lofty thoughts of this poor faltering Mendicant. His cause is pleaded with the King and Queen, the famous Ferdinand and Isabella, & happily they have faith enough to fit out an expedition. In command of three small vessels, two of them not even decked—think of that!—trusting in God & in the surety of his own Beliefs, he sailed into the great trackless waste of unknown waters. But his troubles were only begun—hunger, thirst and mutiny were the deadly foes against which he had to fight. Yet his



stout heart never forsook him, and in spite of all dangers and difficulties he reached the goal of his Imagination.

His subsequent voyages and adventures, the faithlessness of the king whom he had served so loyally, his chains, his degradation, and the tardy honours bestowed upon him after death—all these are thrice told tales which need not be insisted upon here. I have but cited this great Hero as an exemplary instance of what Imagination can do when held up by the courage of a Columbus.

In Science, to the full as much as in Art, or in that branch of Art which we call poetry, Imagination has been the great benefactor of mankind.

A kettle is boiling on the hearth. To the ordinary man the steam bursting out from the spout suggests only a measure of material comfort. The more thinking man perhaps regards it as water in a gaseous form. But the imagination of the creative man, the Poet in the first sense of the word, sees in it a force and a propelling power, & in our own county of Gloucester just two hundred and fifty years ago, the Marquis of Worcester was the first man to succeed in utilising it as such.

How many men had seen apples fall to the ground before Newton? He saw it and great were the results. His Imagination was excited, and the law of gravitation was discovered. A boy of 18 watching the movement backward and forward of a lamp which some chance had set a-swinging in the Cathedral of Pisa, was roused to think, and the issue

of his Imaginings was the invention of the Pendulum as one means of measuring time.

Consider for a moment all that the Imagination of the most gifted men has done for us during the last hundred years. How we compass in a day a distance over which at the beginning of the nineteenth century it took three weeks or more to travel. How the goods and produce of foreign countries, tea, sugar, coffee, once the luxury of the very rich, have been brought to the humblest door, and have become the necessities of the very poor. How the very lightning has been captured & made to serve our purposes. Think of the great engineering works—the tunnelling of the Alps, the cutting of the Suez Canal—think of the advance in surgery rendered possible by the antiseptic methods of a Lister ! Verily we are driven to the reflection that in all material progress of life there is more difference between our days and those of King George the Third than there was between his days & those of William the Conqueror. And all this, I cannot repeat it too often, is due to the working of Imagination.

The dreams and ambitions of Kings, Warriors, and Politicians: some successful, some the reverse; some making for the good of mankind, and some working unmitigated evil—these I purposely leave on one side. With the Alexanders, the Cæsars, the Mahomets, the Napoleons, the Bismarcks we have no concern to-day. Imagination they had in plenty,

but their achievements and their failures are outside the scope of our enquiry.

And now I wish to consider this very school in which we are gathered together to-day as being itself an important and I hope most successful work of Imagination,—the outcome of the thought and care of one man.

For upwards of half a century I have known this beautiful old town. I well remember the first impression which it made upon me. The old 17th century stone buildings, which are such a precious inheritance of our hills: the town hall, the market place—all pictures speaking of a time long since passed away, of days when the Cotswolds were a great wool-growing district, when every man was a flockmaster and every woman span. It was lovely, it had the perfume of a bygone age, like something that has been laid up in lavender. But—it was fast asleep. Except the rush from the grammar school at play-time, and now and again the eager bustle of market days, there was little stir in the place, nothing which told of active life. Now all is changed. Imagination has touched the dear drowsy old town with its Magician's Wand, and we stand amazed at the awakening. A guild of arts and crafts, with a dépôt in London, finds a home here for strenuous work—work beautiful in itself and inspiring in others. The printer, the bookbinder, the carpenter, the jeweller, the enameller, the smith, & I know not how many others, are all busily plying their trades—everywhere the hum of cheerful Industry! Nor has the

leisure hour been left unprovided for. Music, reading, manly games, gardening, even swimming—which seemed most hopeless in our dry country—are here at command. But that is not all.

These schools, of which the autumn session opens to-day, have been established, and it would pass the wit of man to foretell to what their influence may lead. When we reflect that out of a small population of some 1500 souls no fewer than 205 young folk have eagerly flocked here to take advantage of this teaching, we can form some estimate of its power & of its value. And this leads to the further thought of the debt of gratitude owing to the Magician who has wielded his Wand to such good purpose.

It is true, as I said before, that all who come here cannot aspire to take a foremost place in Art. That is reserved for the elect, & in the course of the centuries these have been few indeed. But even so, taking the humblest and least hopeful view of what is being done, we may say that many lives which would otherwise have been dull will have been made bright, if only by acquiring the power of appreciating the work of the great Masters. And not a few, maybe, will have been saved from what is ugly and bad by the love of what is beautiful and good.

You then who are scholars I urge to cultivate Imagination, which is the parent of all true Poetry and all good and noble work. Reverence the Art-poets of the past, bearing in mind that the best work of the Artisan and Craftsman is as much a Poem as "Hamlet" or "Paradise Lost." To those who are

not scholars I pray your leave to say a word, begging them by every means in their power to encourage the good work that Mr. Ashbee has initiated. Mr. Ashbee, I know, sets a high value upon the assistance which he has received from his Co-Trustees and from the local Committee. Far be it from me to belittle their good influence, yet it must be plain to us that to him belongs the credit, as upon him rests the responsibility, of this work of his Imagination. That being so, to us at least there need not attach the *dis*-credit of leaving him to bear his self-imposed burthen alone and without encouragement. A little Sympathy, a little Help, will fall like summer dew upon the good seed which he has sown, and which we may expect to see bearing so rich a harvest of happiness and wellbeing.





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